

Developing the Point Guard Mentality - 8 Characteristics of Great Point Guards

Developing the skills of the point guard is a tedious, careful, and slow process. Coaches can cultivate excellent point guards if they take the right approach to the mental aspect of the game first. Great point guards are tough, unselfish, understand the game, and mentally strong. A winning point guard is in command when the game is on the line and makes all other players better by his presence.

Players are never too young to begin learning the truths of the game. Starting with the fundamentals, a young player must become comfortable with dribbling, passing, shooting, and playing defense. As players develop physically, they also gain knowledge of how to play the game. This development is key for point guards because their position is the most important on the floor. A good point guard makes the team go. **The following eight skills are necessary for great point guards:**

- 1. Study and understand your teammates-**The point guard more than anyone of the floor knows each of his teammates inside and out. He knows all roles on the team and makes it a priority to enhance each of their strengths. He knows how to put them into situations where each player can be successful. For example, a post player is instructed to post up on the blocks and not float out to the perimeter. His skills and ability will impact the team most by playing around the basket. Roles are crucial to good teams and the point guard can solidify the team unit with good leadership skills.
- 2. Be the coach on the floor and in the locker room-**A good point guard embraces his coach's philosophy of the game and instills it on the floor. Knowing what the coach wants and does not want is a rare trait among players. For example, if a team's philosophy is to shoot as many three point shots as possible, the point guard needs to get the ball in the shooter's hands in scoring areas often. If the style of play is to push the ball up the floor, then the point guard needs to organize the break, push it hard, and attack the defense. The term "coach on the floor" belongs to great point guards.
- 3. Earn the players trust-** For a team to follow a leader, they must believe that he would do anything for them. Not only must he play extremely hard, but he can motivate teammates to do the same. Without confidence in your floor general, a team is left vulnerable.
- 4. Set the tone in practice-**Your point guard must understand how a successful practice is run and what the goal of practice is. By serving as a model, he can set the pace for a good practice. Conversely, when a leader is not willing to give it his all, the team will suffer by having a bad practice.
- 5. Knowledge of each possible situation-**Understanding what to do in every situations is the duty of a great point guard. He must know who is in the game and how he can set up teammates to be successful. Offensively, the game plan must be played out to perfection. Good shots, smart passes, and good screening are a must and can be dictated by the point guard. Point guards are responsible for knowing the time and score at all times, the importance of each possession, and control the tempo. He need to be aware of what is taking place and what needs to be accomplished on both ends of the floor. A good test is to watch a leader take over a game at winning time. When his team is out of time outs, the great players take over the does what it takes to win.
- 6. Unselfishness-**Many coaches interpret this to mean the point guard should not look to score. This is not the case, especially if scoring is a strength of your point guard. Unselfishness means that he will sacrifice his game at times to find better opportunities for teammates. Great point guards always make others on the floor better because of his presence.
- 7. Defensive leadership-**A great assist to a teammate for a layup is great, but can't match the impact of solid defensive play. Defense wins games and by taking a charge or forcing a turnover, any player helps his team win. It is more difficult to inspire teams to play defense at times. Players love offense and tolerate defense. A great point guard can lead a team to take ownership of the defensive end of the floor.
- 8. Handle success and defeat in perspective-**Athletic competition is a constant flow of highs and lows. Young players are often greatly affected by the outcome of games. By developing a solid point guard, you will provide your team with a peer who can keep them grounded. Winning often breeds complacency in a team and a good point guard can keep success in perspective. Conversely, a loss can be tough on a team. Good point guards are able to pick up the team with his toughness and work ethic. This characteristic is the foundation of all great point guards.

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